International Seabed Authority ISBA/21/LTC/6

Legal and Technical Commission

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Review of the format and structure of annual reports

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In 2002, the Legal and Technical Commission recommended that contractors follow a standardized form for annual reports to facilitate reporting on their activities carried out in the year in accordance with their contracts with the International Seabed Authority. The standardized form, entitled "Format and structure of annual reports", is contained in the annex to document ISBA/8/LTC/2. The format was structured in a way that was relevant for reporting on exploration activities for polymetallic nodules.

2. Since 2003, the recommended format and structure of annual reports have been largely followed by contractors in preparing their annual reports. They have proven to be a useful guidance to contractors for this purpose. However, with the signing of contracts for the exploration for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich crusts, the format and structure of annual reports should be also applicable to the annual reports on exploration activities for other mineral resources. In addition, and particularly in recent years, the Commission has recommended the inclusion of many additional requirements for the format and content of annual reports, particularly on the standardization of data to be submitted by contractors. The Commission listed the item "Standardization of data and format of the annual reports of the contractors" as one of its outstanding matters in 2013 (ISBA/19/C/14, para. 32) and, in 2014, noted that there was a need to review the recommended template for annual reports and decided to take this matter up at its twenty-first session (ISBA/20/C/20, para. 9).

3. The following elements have been taken into consideration for the review of the format and structure of annual reports:

(a) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors adopted by the Commission (including ISBA/15/LTC/7, ISBA/19/LTC/8 and ISBA/19/LTC/14);

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(b) General comments made by the Commission in its evaluation of all annual reports submitted by contractors, as well as specific comments on some particular annual reports, where appropriate;

(c) The template for the submission of data, as agreed between the Authority and contractors in 2012;

(d) The outcomes of the workshops organized by the Authority in recent years.

II. Recommendations

4. The Commission is invited to review the draft revised format and structure of annual reports prepared by the Secretariat (to be issued as a working paper) and to make appropriate recommendations for its use by contractors in the preparation and submission of annual reports.